

# AN AGONISTIC DISPLAY IN MALE SHINING FLYCATCHERS

by Tony Stokes \*

At 1405 hours on Wednesday 6 August 1980 at Little Nourlangie Rock Billabong in Kakadu National Park, Northern Territory, two male Shining Flycatchers *Myiagra alecto* flew about 60 metres from the opposite side of the billabong to the side I was on and then in circuits with frequent abrupt reversals in and out of the foliage of a *Pandanus aquaticus* growing on the water's edge about 4 metres from me. I could not determine whether the roles of pursuer and pursued alternated between both birds or whether they were constant.

After about five minutes of such pursuit the pair landed in the pandanus about a metre above the water and engaged in the following display.

They were within a metre of each other at about the same level but on different branches. Each alternatively fluffed their body feathers, raised their crown feathers, arched their tail, raised their head and body, and gave a whirring 'creeek' call. The displaying bird's head faced at right angles from the other bird watching it. The display lasted 5-8 minutes and then one bird flew back across the billabong and the other flew further along the shoreline I was on.

These birds were probably not breeding since the breeding season in the Northern Territory is November - February (Frith and Davies 1961), in the Kimberley Region of Western Australia December - March (Storr 1980) and in North-eastern Queensland September - March (Lavery et al. 1968, and Gill 1970), yet the display seemed to be one of territorial demarcation. Mosey (1956) described a similar display,

apparently territorial, by five males in June-July in Papua New Guinea where the species is stated to be "...no doubt territorial and sedentary" (Bell 1970). Perhaps the same can be said of the Northern Territory population.

## REFERENCES

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